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THE NAVAJO.

BY A. M. STEPHEN.

The Navajo, or, as they call themselves, Tin-néh, meaning "the people," constitute the most flourishing branch of that vigorous Athapascan stock which is spread in widely separate tribal communities on the Pacific slope, from Alaska to Mexico.

An extensive scope of land, embracing northeastern Arizona and the adjoining northwestern corner of New Mexico, is held by them as a reservation, with the Hopi, or so-called Moki, a small pueblo tribe, occupying its southwestern corner. These latter live in compact villages of stone houses, built on rocky promontories projecting from the higher table-lands. They have long been on fairly amicable terms with their neighbors, yet in some of their habits traces of an earlier hostile period still survive. They persist in clinging to their secluded habitations on mesa points of difficult access; they nightly shut up their flocks in little pens on cliff ledges close to their houses; and although the Navajo are constantly trafficking at their villages, it is rare for a Hopi to venture far among them, nor do the scornful insults of the Navajo ever provoke a Hopi to retaliate.

The Table-lands.—This table-land region, although composed of horizontal sandstone measures, is by no means a mere elevated plain of level uniformity, for the area occupied by the Navajo displays a wide diversity of features. On the boundary line of the two territories it is traversed from south to north by the Tunicha mountains, a lofty range covered with magnificent pine forests, and wide plateaus lie folded along its flanks, through which solemn, cliff-walled cañons wind in tortuous courses into the heart of the range.

To the north and west, along the course of the San Juan, which forms the northern boundary of the Navajo country, broken ranges, occasionally clustering in high volcanic domes, confine the river in deep, gloomy gorges; and toward the south low sloping hills rise in straggling ridges covered with dwarfish piñon and gnarly juniper.

The waters of a primeval period have eroded spacious valleys through the great plateau which originally overlaid the entire region, and smaller defiles intersect it in every direction, cutting it up into numerous separate mesas, with steep, rocky cliffs sharply outlining their irregular forms. The principal valleys extend for long distances; one of them, called the Tchi-ni-lí, stretches along the west side of the Tunicha range, exposing a broad, level pass across the reservation from its southern limit to the San Juan river and beyond. To the traveler following the low-lying trails the region presents itself as a land of cliff-walled, bare, sandy valleys, while to one upon the higher plateaus it offers an immense landscape of undulating plain, studded with woody hills, and viewed from the mountaintops the land seems everywhere cleft into a network of jagged cañons.

In the few weeks of early summer the table-lands are seen in their most attractive guise. High mesa plateau and low sandy valley become meadow-like with short grassy verdure, and richly adorned with flowers in profusion, blooming in surprising variety and beauty; marigold, larkspur, daisy and lily, and such familiar acquaintances mingling among countless clusters of less known flowering plants and fragrant herbage. The tracts of desert now strive to conceal their arid nature; the sagebrush contrives to imbibe sufficient sap to brighten its crisp gray leaves with a tint of green, and the furzy greasewood hangs in flakes of yellow bloom. Straggling beds of prickly pear spread out in exasperating luxuriance, and each thorny, green-skinned tablet, bursting with stemless blossoms, seems grafted with rosebuds. Vagrant pariahs of cactus kin are also glowing with rich-hued flowers of surpassing brilliance, crimson, pink, and gold, gorgeous and odorless. But within the broad horizon no winding streams flow through the valleys; no brook trickles down the mesa side; not a single glimpse of running water may be discovered. Valley and cliff and mesa level lie parching under a hot sun in a cloudless, unchanging sky, and this fair but arid landscape leaves a cheerless impression.

In July and August sudden, heavy showers of short duration

are common, and the sandy soil absorbs enough moisture to nourish vegetation. But the deep channels carved through mesa and valley carry off almost the entire rainfall in swift rushing torrents to the profound cañons of the San Juan and the Colorado. Water from the melting snow, and of course a portion of the rainfall, percolates through the porous sandstone of the surface measure, and issues in numerous small springs along the edges of the mesa cañons, their locality being usually indicated by the convergence of trails and the trampled bareness of the vicinity.

Pastoral Life.—The region is specially adapted for sheep culture, and the Navajo equally well adapted for shepherds, coinciding circumstances which have happily influenced their destiny, transforming them wholly into a peaceable, pastoral tribe. Every family is possessed of a flock of sheep and goats and a band of horses, so that the condition of the tribe is not only far removed from hardship, but is really that of comparative affluence.

To maintain the flocks in sufficient pasture they move them to different grazing grounds at least twice a year, sometimes oftener, these movements being regulated by the condition of the grass and the supply of water. In a dry season many of the smaller springs cease to flow, and besides that, when flocks are held too long in one place, their close cropping destroys the vegetation, enforcing an abandonment of the locality for two or three years, by which time, if left entirely alone, the grasses again recover. The usual practice is to take the flocks up to the higher plateaus and mountains in summer, grazing in the neighborhood of springs or an occasional rain pool, and moving down to the valleys and lower wooded mesas in the winter, when both sheep and shepherds depend, to a great extent, upon the snow for their water supply. By this means they are able to partially utilize the pasturage in the broad waterless valleys, retiring as the summer advances to the grassy uplands that have been fertilized by the melting snow.

This shepherd's life, of course, prevents them from dwelling in large communities; perhaps some desirable watering place may be occupied by as many as ten or twelve families, usually of the same kindred, but commonly fewer than that number frequent the same locality, and it is rare to see more than three or four huts together. A few of the larger cañons containing small streams and patches of arable land are occupied permanently; one of these, called the Tse-yi, is famous for the numerous ancient dwellings in its cliffs,

its peach orchards, and other memorials of its former house-building occupants. This is a specially attractive summer resort, and is the scene of many festive concourses, scattered members of the different families gathering there from every part of the reservation to feast together for ten days or a fortnight upon green corn, water-melons, and peaches.

Aside from the cañon localities the spot chosen for a dwelling place is either some sheltering mesa nook or southward hill slope in the edge of a piñon grove, securing convenient fuel, and not too far from water. But the Navajo seldom lives very close to a spring, a survival of an old habit of their former hunting life when they kept away from the springs as much as possible so as not to disturb the game when coming to water. This choice of secluded dwelling place is apt to mislead a stranger who might cross the reservation and deem it quite unoccupied; and yet it is estimated there are upwards of 15,000 persons within its limits.

But likely enough a family may be met moving with their flock of sheep and herd of ponies to fresh pasture. The *hos-teen*, as the head of a family is conventionally called, drives before him the band of ponies, which, as a rule, are a degenerate lot of "scrubs," small bodied, big headed, and ungainly. He carries a bow and quiver of arrows slung at his side, and probably a rifle and revolver, for the coyotes, and now and then a wolf, make havoc among their sheep, and against these depredators they now resort to the more effective modern weapons. He carries on his saddle two or three blankets and a buckskin or two, but is not very heavily loaded, as he has to chase the straying ponies and keep them to the trail. Following hard behind comes the bleating flock of sheep and goats, meandering and nibbling as they are urged slowly along by the dust-grimed squaw and her children. Two or three of the more tractable ponies carry burdens of household gear stuffed in buckskin pouches and blankets; a bag or two of corn; a bundle of washed wool, and the primitive weaving apparatus; baskets and wicker water-bottles, and often a little imp of two or three years will be perched securely on top of the miscellaneous pyramid. Three or four dogs are an invariable accompaniment of such a caravan, sorry looking curs, but invaluable helpers to the children while herding the flocks.

Land Tenure.—These changes to fresh pastures occasionally lead a family to a neighborhood in which they have never lived before,

for the constant increase of their flocks necessitates wider movements than formerly.

The springs and waters are generally regarded as common property of the tribe, but the arable spots in their vicinity are distinctly held by individuals as real property. The flocks of these families consume all the surrounding pasture, so that virtually many of the waters are held as family property by the people who live nearest them. But in fact the extremely limited water supply of the region has grown to be of the gravest concern to the Navajo, and speedily they must either construct artificial reservoirs or curtail their flocks.

In an earlier time, when the organization of the gentes or clans was more compact, a scope of country was roughly parceled out and held as a clan ground, and many of the clans take their names from these localities. Vivid traditions are still extant of those early times before the Spaniard brought sheep and horses to their land, when they lived on the spoil of the chase, on wild fruits, grass seeds, and piñon nuts. Indian corn, however, was known to them apparently from the earliest times, but while they remained a mere hunting tribe they detested the labor of planting. But as their numbers increased, the game, more rigorously hunted, became scarce, and to maintain themselves in food necessity forced them to a more general cultivation of corn and the regular practice of planting became established among them.

There are now no defined boundaries of these ancient clan grounds, but they are still in a vague way recognized and spoken of as "my mother's land," for the Navajo traces his ancestry only through his mother. Families cling to localities and accustomed sections not very far apart, and when compelled to move their flocks to a strange neighborhood they do not seek it as a matter of right, but of courtesy, and the movement is never undertaken until after satisfactory arrangements have been effected with the families already living there.

Primitive Architecture.—These matters adjusted, when the family arrives the husband's first care is to build a dwelling, so he chooses a suitable place, and all the neighbors come to help him.

They have two distinct types of dwellings, the bough arbor for summer and the earth-covered hut for winter, the former for temporary occupancy merely, but the hut is looked upon as the family home. Many of the summer shelters are extremely primitive, being

mere wind-breaks of rudely piled brushwood ; but other forms of more careful construction are common—(1) boughs in foliage set round in a circle near some conveniently spreading cedar trees, which are utilized to form a latticed roof for the enclosure ; (2) simple scaffolds framed around with interlacing boughs ; and (3) many quaint little sheds made of branches leaning upon a straight pole supported by forked uprights.

Their winter dwellings also display different crude methods. Trunks of stunted cedar and piñon trees, set with their tips leaning together like a tripod, are the ordinary house frame. Another has stout uprights supporting a flat roof of poles, with sloping sides of tree limbs ; in another the tree limbs are laid around horizontally, in a circle, tapering at the height of six or seven feet, resembling a large, misshapen beehive. Near some of the water-courses small coverts are dug out in the sandy banks, and in the cañon nooks, where small stones are plenty, huts with low, rough walls are occasionally built.

Six forms of the picturesque summer bowers and six of the earth-covered winter dwellings are recognized, each form being known by an appropriate name, but they hold no tradition that they ever lived in caves or skin lodges.

The typical Navajo dwelling is the *hogan*,* a conical structure of tree trunks and limbs, covered with earth till it looks like an irregular, dome-shaped mound ; but it is not by any means thrown together at hap-hazard, for every detail is traditionally prescribed, and the process may be condensed as follows : First, a circle of the required size is slightly excavated to secure additional interior space and a level floor. Three short piñon trees are trimmed, leaving a wide fork at the small end : these are interlocked to form the apex, with the extended butts resting just on the outside of the circular hollow, one end pointing to the south, one to the west, and the other to the north. Two long, straight limbs are laid upon the east side, their smaller ends resting upon the apex, the butts diverging about three feet apart. Two small forked uprights, supporting a horizontal stick about four feet from the ground, are set at the butts of these straight limbs to form lintel- and door-posts, great care being taken to have this doorway face directly to the east. Stout poles and branches are laid closely around between the main timbers,

* The *h* is pronounced as *ch* in German *ich*.

the smaller ends leaning upon the forked apex, and the spreading butts enclosing the circle. A covered projecting doorway is made of straight boughs resting upon the rude door lintel and another stick laid across the two straight limbs which define the entrance. This cross-piece rests about three feet below the apex, which space is left open for a smoke exit, and the doorway thus projects from the east side of the hogan like a dormer window. In cold weather the entrance is closed with a blanket or a skin suspended from the door lintel. Cedar bark is laid over the entire structure, which is then deeply covered with earth. There is no prescribed size for a hogan, but the average dimensions are about seven feet high at the apex and fourteen feet in diameter. This uncouth hut may scarcely be called comfortable; at best it is merely warm and habitable.

House Dedication.—Soon after the completion of a hogan a “house-warming” or dedication is invariably held, which ceremony partakes much of the nature of a religious duty, the presence of a priest, or shaman, being indispensable, and a good round fee is always paid him in sheep, ponies, or other Navajo effects.

The gods are said to have made the first hogan in the form of a dome; from east to west it was spanned with rays of morning and evening sunlight, and from north to south with the arching beams of the rainbow. The Navajo still maintains the form of this mythic hut, and the peculiar virtues deemed inherent in the primal elements and the blessings of the gods who made the first dwelling are still invoked in their “house-songs.”

A convenient time is chosen shortly after a hogan has been completed, and all the neighbors and friends of the family are invited to attend its dedication. The lonely spot grows animate with a gathering throng as the guests come scampering in upon their wiry ponies. In the distance these mounted groups lend the needed color tints to a scenery otherwise apt to be sombre; the scarlet mantles and feathery plumes of the men, the blue tunics of the women, the glitter of silver ornaments and gaudy trappings, are vividly displayed against the dull gray stretches of sagebrush. But on close approach the individual stands confessed in very grotesque array; incongruous odds and ends of the white man’s clothing sit ill upon him; a fastidious onlooker would pronounce them ill smelling and dirty, and although the men are robust and the women comely, still they show at their best as figures in the landscape.

Family friends and acquaintances meet and exchange greetings; the older men squat around under the trees and discuss their mutual affairs; the young men gather in groups to gamble, and the women prepare food for the night's feast. Fires are lit and sheep are slaughtered and dressed, ribs are skewered on saplings to roast before the fire, and haunches are spitted for broiling on the embers.

Shortly before sunset the housewife grinds some white corn into meal, which she places in a shallow saucer-shaped basket and hands to her husband. He enters the hut, and beginning on the left-hand side of the doorway, thence passing to the south, he successively rubs a little of the meal on each of the principal timbers of the house frame. As he does this he mutters a low prayer to the gods who made the first house; that the timbers may never break and fall upon the inmates; that they may enjoy health and live long beneath them; that food may always be in plenty there; that they may cover increasing possessions, and that ghosts, evil dreams, and all other malign influences may never enter the dwelling. He then sprinkles meal in a circle around the interior, asking the protection of the deities at all the cardinal points, and, going out, he returns the basket of meal to his wife, who then enters, carrying the basket and some firewood. She makes a fire near the center of the hut, and as it begins to burn she sprinkles an offering of meal upon it, and very devoutly utters her traditional prayer:

Burn serenely, my fire.

May peace surround my fire.

My fire prepares my children's food;

May it be sweet and make them happy.

All now gather within the hut and squat around upon sheepskins spread on the floor, and the women, after setting food vessels among the men, huddle together by themselves upon the north side of the floor space. All help themselves from the jars and basins by dipping in with the fingers; the mutton is broken in shreds and the bones are gnawed and sociably passed from hand to hand. When the feast has been finished and the pots set outside for the dogs to lick, tobacco is produced and cigarettes of corn-husks are rolled, and while every one smokes good-natured jokes and gossip prevail. Presently the "old man of the songs," as the shaman is called, takes his seat under the west timber so as to face the east,

and, shaking his rattle, he begins the following first "song of the house":

Rising Sun ! when you shall shine,
Make this house happy.
Beautify it with your beams ;
Make this house happy.
God of Dawn ! your white blessings spread ;
Make this house happy.
Guard the doorway from all evil ;
Make this house happy.
White Corn ! (the Spirit of) abide herein ;
Make this house happy.
Soft Wealth !* may this hut cover much ;
Make this house happy.
Male (heavy) Rain ! your virtues send ;
Make this house happy.
Corn Pollen ! bestow content ;
Make this house happy.
May peace around this family dwell ;
Make this house happy.

The song is joined in by all the men, but the women never sing at social or religious gatherings, although they sing really beautiful songs when a few of them get together by themselves, and they sing very sweetly, for the Navajo women have remarkably soft, pleasant voices. In these ceremonial songs all the men join as a matter of course, and right lustily and vigorously. It is also quite common to hear a primitive style of part singing, some piping in a curious falsetto, others droning a sonorous bass, and not altogether without some approach to harmony. There is considerable melody in some of their tunes, but most of them are spoiled by being pitched at the very top of the voice. The old shaman acts as leader, each shaman having his own group of traditional songs, fetiches, and particular ceremonies, and after he has started a song he listens very closely to hear that the right words are sung.

After singing to the east, other songs are sung to the south, west, and north. These are all in strains very similar to the first one, but as the Navajo assigns different groups of deities to each of the car-

* That is, all articles made of soft materials, as skins, blankets, etc.

dinal points he petitions for different blessings from the different directions. Thus to the west he sings to a mountain deity that the yellow light of sunset may imbue his dwelling with its beautiful influence; that the spirit of yellow corn may sit in his hut; that it may cover much "hard wealth," such as weapons, utensils, and silver and shell ornaments; that the "young rain" (meaning mild showers) may fall around his dwelling. The heavy rain is regarded as the male rain and the gentle showers as the female, and both kinds of moisture are deemed necessary to fertilize. Altogether thirty-two of these songs are sung, and their singing is so timed that the last one ushers in the first gray streaks of dawn, and the visitors then gather in their horses and ride home.

Family Customs.—By common consent the house and all of the domestic gear belong entirely to the wife; the husband owns a few blankets, his saddle and horse trappings, his weapons, ornaments, and other small articles stowed in his own buckskin bag, but all else that the house covers is supposed to belong to the wife. If she does not already possess a corn-field by inheritance or purchase, the husband must plant one for her. Of course she assists in the planting; the man hoes the ground and she drops the seed, but he constructs the rude fence of brush and tree branches. He also plants and takes care of his own corn-field, which may probably be in quite a different locality from his wife's. Where a man has more than one wife, for polygamy is common, it is incumbent upon him to do all of the heavy field-work for them, or to hire it done by some of the young men. The wife owns her own sheep and horses and marriage gives the husband no claim upon them. Aside from her kitchen duties, she has her vertical loom suspended under some convenient tree, where she spins her choice wool and weaves blankets and her own dresses. The children and "younger brothers" usually herd the sheep and the man's principal care is the horse herd.

The popular conception of the Indian squaw in thralldom will not at all apply to the Navajo women; the children belong to her wholly, and she has the entire control of the house life. Occasionally, to be sure, some surly reprobate maltreats his wife, but these outrages are usually followed by a demand for reparation by the woman's family, and this consideration restrains many a gust of passion.

Parents display the fondest affection for their children, rarely resorting to punishment. Members of a family hold one another in

warm regard, and ties of kindred are observed, even to the remote collateral branches, which in civilization have long ceased to be recognized.

Deference is shown to the chiefs and their advice is generally followed, yet there is no real authority inherent to the chiefship. Their laws consist of taboos, religious or superstitious observances, and ancient customs. The two former are still rigidly adhered to, but the latter have lost much of their former consequence, and the younger people are apt to construe them to suit their own convenience. Theoretically they have many punitive and retaliatory laws, but they are now seldom enforced. An essential condition of primitive social life is still very marked among them, namely, the habitual deference of the younger to the elder, and this estimable rule is the effectual binding link of their crude society.

Costumes.—Their typical dress has been almost obliterated since the advent of the trader among them, but as the Navajo now appears he may thus be sketched : Hair all drawn smoothly to the back of the head and done up into a compact club or cue of hour-glass shape ; a red silk sash worn as a turban and decorated with feathers and silver ornaments ; large silver ear-rings and heavy necklaces of coral, thin discs of white shell and turquoise, and strings of globular silver beads and other ornaments of their own manufacture ; a loose sack or short shirt of bright-colored calico, and loose breeches of the same material ; belts consisting of large heavy discs or oval plates of silver strung upon a strip of leather are worn both by men and women ; low moccasins of buckskin, soled with rawhide, surmounted with leggings of dyed deerskin, which are secured with garters woven of thread in fanciful designs. There is little or no difference between their summer and winter dress, and they constantly wear a heavy woolen blanket as a mantle. Firearms have displaced the bow and arrow, although formerly these were an essential part of every-day costume. A curious relic of the habitual use of the discarded weapon alone survives in their fashion of still wearing the silver-mounted leather wrist-guard as an ornament.

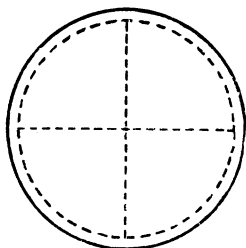
Like the men, most of the women wear calico ; their dresses made in the simple fashion, of a loose jacket and short petticoats ; but, differing from the men, each of them possesses the typical Navajo woman's costume, which she wears on all ceremonial occasions. The hair is dressed exactly the same as the men's, but no headgear is

ever worn. The ears of the women are pierced, but they never wear ornaments in them now, and this peculiarity is explained in a curious way by the men. They say that the infidelity of their women is notorious, and that formerly when married women wore ornaments in their ears, an injured husband punished an unfaithful wife by tearing them through the ear lobes. Now when a girl is married she takes the ornaments from her ears and wears them hanging from her necklace. Besides their necklaces, which are similar to those of the men, they also wear numerous silver bracelets, bangles, and finger rings. The typical dress is a heavy woolen tunic of dark blue, with wide designs in scarlet along the borders; it reaches just below the knee and is confined round the waist with a woven girdle. It consists merely of two pieces of the required size, sewed with yarn at the sides from the bottom hem to the waist, and the upper corners tied together at the shoulder, but the young women now generally wear a calico dress under this rough tunic. The moccasin is shaped just like the men's, but fastened to the back part of the upper is the half of a large buckskin, which is wrapped around the leg in regular folds from ankle to knee, and on the outside of the leg with a row of silver buttons. The women also wear a blanket as a mantle, but it is lighter, of brighter-colored wools, and more elaborate in design than those worn by the men. The women dress their children in miniature of the adult costumes.

Marriage Customs.—Polygamy is very general; a few men have four or five wives, quite a number have three, but two may be said to be the polygamous custom. It is difficult to estimate, but probably about a third of the male adults are polygamists. Girls are betrothed at a very early age, and some are married while yet mere children, but as a rule the marriageable age may be set from twelve to fourteen. The typical marriage between two young persons is arranged by their families, the elder brother of the bride's mother setting the value of the presents, which the bridegroom's people must give the bride's family, ranging from five to fifteen horses.

On the night set for the marriage both families and their friends meet at the hut of the bride's family. Here there are much feasting and singing, and the bride's family make return presents to the bridegroom's people, but not, of course, to the same amount. The women of the bride's family prepare cornmeal porridge, which is poured into a saucer-shaped basket. The bride's uncle then

sprinkles the sacred blue pollen of the larkspur upon the porridge, forming a design as in the accompanying figure. The bride has hitherto been lying beside her mother, concealed under a blanket, on the woman's side of the hut. After calling her to come to him, her uncle seats her on the west side of the hut, and the bridegroom sits down before her, with his face toward hers, and the basket of porridge set between them. A gourd of water is then given to the bride, who pours some



of it on the bridegroom's hands while he washes them, and he then performs a like office for her. With the first two fingers of the right hand he then takes a pinch of the porridge, just where the line of pollen touches the circle of the east side. He eats this one pinch, and the bride dips with her fingers from the same place. He then takes in succession a pinch from the other places where the lines touch the circle and a final pinch from the center, the bride's fingers following his. The basket of porridge is then passed over to the younger guests, who speedily devour it with merry clamor, a custom analogous to dividing the bride's cake at a wedding. The elder relatives of the couple now give them much good and lengthy advice, and the marriage is complete. After this many songs, which are really prayers, are chanted and sung by all the men, and the lips of the women may be seen moving as they repeat these song-prayers, but they give no utterance to the words.

While these songs are in progress the newly-married couple contrive to steal away unobserved to a hut which the bridegroom has previously prepared.

Taboos.—A taboo now lies between the bride's mother and her son-in-law, and from the marriage night henceforth they must never look each other in the face again. Several other taboos are also rigidly observed; they must never touch fish, and nothing will induce them to taste one; their forests abound with wild turkey, but they are strictly forbidden to eat them; bears are quite numerous, but as they are also taboo they will not even touch a bearskin robe; nor must any one plant a tree; and the flesh of swine they abominate as if they were the devoutest of Hebrews. The wood of the hunting corral in which they trap the antelope is also tabooed.

They observe many curious ceremonies before and during a hunt, and all of the tree limbs forming the hunt corral are held as having been sacrificed to the hunting deities. Not only do they abhor food cooked on a fire of wood obtained from these enclosures, but they also keep at a distance from such a fire, dreading to feel its warmth or inhale its smoke.

There are also other social taboos. A man cannot marry a woman of his own clan, nor may brother and sister touch one another nor even receive anything directly from each others hands. Thus, if a sister wishes to give her brother an article, she places it on the ground and he picks it up. The origin of these singular customs is very obscure, and although for some of them very judicious reasons are assigned, yet they all rest upon vague and inadequate traditions. The most embarrassing of them all, however, is the tabooed mother-in-law, as it is the custom for the husband to live among his wife's people, and the commonest sounds in a Navajo camp are the friendly shouts, warning these marriage relatives apart.

Common Arts.—Weaving is entirely a woman's art with the Navajo, and they weave blankets and mantles, rugs and saddle-cloths of native wool and also of yarn bought from the trader; they are of endless variety in quality, texture, and design, and although it may be said they all bear a common resemblance, yet no two of them are exactly alike. The principal designs are emblematic, yet the weavers do not hold themselves closely bound to these conventions, but freely follow their own conceits as fancy leads them; each fabric thus holds an individuality of its own. They also weave their own dress material, girdles, garters, and hair-bands, these latter for tying up the cue at the back of the head. They also make their own dyes of vegetable matter, gums, and ochres in colors black, blue, red, and yellow. The older women still make cooking utensils of pottery, but the young women no longer practice the art. The iron camp-kettles and tin cups and coffee pots brought in by the trader are rapidly displacing the primitive gourd ladles and earthen jars. They also make saucer-shaped water-tight baskets and wicker water-bottles, coarse in texture but of elegant model.

Some of the men work in a rude way in iron and silver, fashioning bridal and personal ornaments; and all of them can dress

skins and make their own shoes and leggings, their own articles of dress, and horse trappings; but aside from these the men have no arts and, fortunately, they never acquired any knowledge of making an intoxicating liquor.

Mythology.—Their mythology is exceedingly complex and equally difficult to comprehend or to define. Their religious practices are mystic to obscurity, and within these limits it is almost hopeless to attempt treating this subject intelligibly.

Before the present world there were four others of which they have traditional story. The first under-world was far down in the "below," in the heart of the earth, and "First-man" and "First-woman," superhuman beings, always existed there. From pellicles of skin which they rubbed from different parts of their bodies they made eight other superhuman beings and animal monsters, and placed two at each of the cardinal points. Thus, at the east, Te'-hol-tso-di (a horned water monster) and E'-dit-ni (thunder); south, Tchalth (frog) and Te-hli'ng (horned horse), who was also a water monster; at the west, Ish'-een-es-tsun (salt woman) and Tho'-ne-ni-li (water sprinkler, a youth); north, Tûlth-k'le-ha-le (a swan-like monster) and Sis-tye'lth (tortoise). One man and one woman, the *first of the human family*, were also produced in the earliest under-world from pellicles of skin, as were also the first of animal kind, which, curiously enough, were locust, red ant, and horned toad.

These beings quarreled, and the water monsters caused a deluge. First-man made a raft of reeds, and by this they all floated to the roof, where Locust bored a hole through which they all ascended to the second world. Similar incidents, vague, weird, and inconsistent, occur in the succeeding worlds, a final flood compelling the ascent of the greatly increased human family to this present world. This they reached by entering a giant reed, which grew through the roof of the fourth world in a crevice opened by Badger, Rabbit, Bear, and all other animals that burrow in the ground or make lairs in the cliffs, all of which preceded the human family through this orifice. This place where they came up is called the Ha-d'ji-nai, and is said to be situated in southeastern Utah, but no Navajo has ever seen it. All mankind came up at the same time and place, and the gods distributed them over the face of the earth.

The popular deities now most generally appealed to are those in

the east, presiding over the dawn and the white light of day; in the west, to the deity who distributes the yellow light of sunset and who is also the hunter's patron. In the distant west, across the great water, is a very beneficent goddess called Es-ts'un n'ut-le-hi (woman metamorphic). Every evening she has grown old and feeble and every morning she resumes her state of maidenhood. The twin sons of this goddess, "The child of the waters" and "The slayer of alien gods," who frequent the six sacred mountains surrounding the Navajo land, are also important factors. The sun and the moon, the "Blackness of the above," which is regarded as the genius of fecundity, and the female spirit of the earth, and many other minor deities are all frequently petitioned. They hold no conception of a universal or controlling spirit, and their deities are not spiritual, but grossly material genii of localities, with limited attributes and functions.

The cardinal points have emblematic colors, and when enumerated it is always in the sequence: east (white), south (blue), west (yellow), north (black).

Religious Ceremonies.—The most important religious ceremonies are only celebrated during the winter, in the season when the snakes are asleep, as they have it; but aside from this limitation there are no specified times nor any regular succession of religious feasts. All their religious observances are either for the cure of disease or relief from sorcery, and their character and extent are determined by the patient and his people, who bear all the expense attending them. When a person falls ill or deems himself under a spell he and his friends decide upon which priest or shaman they shall summon. Each of these shamans, priests, or medicine-men, as they are indifferently designated in English, has his own particular songs and rites and his own scale of fees for attendance. If the patient is wealthy, he may decide to give the grand "mountain chant" * or "nine nights' song," and engage all the shamans of his region.

Upon the floor of the song or medicine lodge very elaborate sand mosaics are prepared, depicting mystic emblems, and groups of various deities, the details and costumes being very skillfully por-

* See W. Matthews' "Mountain Chant of the Navajos" in Ann. Rep. Bu. Ethnology for 1883-'84.

trayed in many-colored sands, charcoal, and ochres. During the ceremonies the patient is sprinkled with the colored pulp taken from the mosaic upon which he is seated, and at their conclusion it is entirely obliterated and the sands carried off and scattered. At night, while these observances are in progress, processions of masked and painted dancers, songs, and curious feats of magic take place in large bough enclosures, lit up with great bonfires, as all of their public ceremonies are held only after night-fall, between dark and daylight.

The deities are invoked not only to relieve the patient at whose instance the feast is given, but also any others present similarly afflicted. Rains and good grass for the flocks and bounteous favors to all the people are sung for, many of the episodes being vividly dramatic and impressive. These gatherings are also availed of for social intercourse, amusement, and mutual rejoicing.

Medicines.—They hold that all sickness is caused either by evil ghosts, sorcery, disregard of taboos, or neglect of fetich rites; hence the office of the shaman is really that of a priestly exorciser. In the proper sense of the term they have no medicine, although many herbs and other substances are used, but entirely without intelligence.

They bleed by incising with sharp fragments of obsidian, but metal must never be used. They practice administering medicines vicariously, as, for instance, to a well husband for a sick wife, but they firmly believe that more virtue attaches to the rattle and songs of the shaman than to any of the materials prescribed.

Their sweat-house is a miniature hogan, just large enough to cover a man when squatted on his heels. When used, hot stones are rolled into it, and the aperture is tightly closed with blankets. No water is thrown upon the stones, but the patient is filled with all he can drink, and on emerging he is, commonly, scoured dry with sand. It is really of great sanitary value, although probably more sick persons are killed than cured, through ignorance of its proper use.

Present Transitional Condition.—The Navajo cannot be classed with the ordinary "Agency Indians," as they are in no sense dependent upon the Government, but are entirely self-sustaining. More than twenty years ago, after a long period of hostility, they were subdued by troops, and an agency reestablished which has been maintained ever since. At that time it is probable they would all have perished had it not been for the Government aid received. Now,

however, the great bulk of the tribe never go near the agency unless it be on the occasion of an issue of wagons or farm implements.

They are in a very interesting stage of transition, and clearly one of very material progress. The men have adopted modern tools and discarded the primitive appliances in all their common arts. The women still cling to the traditional methods in their special arts of spinning, weaving, basket-making, and pottery, but in the kitchen the ordinary utensils of civilization are forcing the crude pottery vessels into disuse. For the cumbrous wooden hoes and planting sticks modern implements have been substituted, thus enabling them to plant a greatly increased acreage. The proximity of trading posts, as has been mentioned, has radically transformed their original costumes and modified many of the early barbaric traits, and also affords them an excellent market for their wool, pottery, blankets, and other products.

Bright calico and Mexican straw hats are now their ordinary summer attire, and they take kindly to our comfortable heavy garments in cold weather. Firearms have almost entirely superseded the primitive weapons; silver ornaments of their own manufacture have displaced those of copper and brass; the glass beads of earlier days are now regarded with contempt, and valuable coral necklaces have become the fashion.

But perhaps the most promising indication of their steady advance toward civilization is displayed in their growing desire to possess permanent dwellings, and many of them have already built for themselves comfortable two-roomed stone cabins. The steady growth of their wealth, in the constant increase of their flocks and herds, insures the continuance of this upward movement.

A judicious law might be made whereby they could legally hold their present grazing grounds, for in this arid region of scant vegetation a wider scope than elsewhere is necessary for pasturage, and, as most of their land lies at an altitude of over 6,000 feet, only a very small portion of it can ever be brought under cultivation. Were they thus guaranteed against interruption, judging from the rapid progress they have made during the last fifteen years, it is presumable that in a comparatively short time they will win their own way to a respectable social condition.